News release

Met Office joins forces with SWEB to encourage green travel

21 November 2002

The Met Office and London Electricity Group (LE Group), which trades under SWEB in the south-west, are working together to tackle transport issues associated with moving to their new premises near Junction 29 off the M5.

The Met Office, which launches its Staff Travel Plan in Exeter today (21 November), and LE Group which is to launch their plan next year, both agree that a joint approach will bring bigger benefits for staff and the community, rather than looking at travel issues in isolation.

Work has already begun on a joint initiative - an innovative web-based travel information service, which will allow LE Group staff to share transport with employees from the Met Office - and vice-versa. The service will also carry frequently updated travel information, relevant to both sets of staff, as well as targeted information for both sets of employees. A working version of the new site will be up and running next summer.

Speaking at the Travel Plan launch, David Screen, the Travel Plan Manager for the Met Office, said: "A lot of companies have staff travel plans in place to help employees choose different ways of getting to work but we think our work with LE Group is a fresh approach. Eventually, we would like more of our neighbours in this part of Exeter to join us on the project."

Also speaking at the event was LE Group's Travel Plan Manager, Steve Weeks, who added: "With both companies moving to the site, and both expecting to experience similar issues along the way, both companies have been meeting on a regular basis for some time. This partnership was a natural progression, particularly as transport is now such a major issue in Exeter. Only by working together, can we help ease the congestion in the area."

Key elements of the Met Office's Staff Travel Plan, include working with a variety of regional agencies, including Devon County Council, Exeter City Council and the Sowton Travel Forum.

The Met Office plan offers:

- well-lit and well maintained pedestrian and cycle routes in and around the new site
- lockers, changing facilities and showers for those that choose to walk or cycle to work
- an expanded bus interchange on the Honiton Road Park and Ride site
- a bus service to the City Centre passing through the Met Office site linking the site with nearby train stations
- priority parking for car sharers, a free emergency ride home if the car sharing arrangements break down, plus the possibility of other car-related incentives such as, for example, a free quarterly valet
- secure, covered parking for motorcyclists
- flexible working, home working, video-conferencing, and business travel guidelines all of which can reduce traffic flow at the busiest times of the day

The Met Office's HQ and Operations Centre will have 1,150 staff when the site is finally completed. It is due to be opened next autumn and LE Group's Customers Branch Office, which is due to open in January 2004, will have up to 1,000 staff.

Notes

The Met Office is a world leader in weather forecasting and related environmental services. For 140 years, it has been the UK's national weather service, providing valuable advice to government departments, companies in commerce, industry and the media. However, the Met Office does not just focus on weather forecasts. It is an international science-based business, looking at the wide-ranging impacts of weather. Visit the Met Office's web site.

LE Group acquired SWEB's supply business in 1999. LE Group is one of the UK's major energy companies. It is responsible for the electricity distribution networks in London; South East and Eastern England; it supplies energy to around 5 million customers nationwide; it owns and manages private electricity distribution networks such as those at London's major airports and is part of a consortium which is responsible for the electricity needs of London's Underground; it owns electricity power stations in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire and is involved in the ownership and development of windfarms on and off-shore. Overall the group employs around 11,000 staff with major centres in London, as well as SW, NE and SE England. LE Group is an EDF company. Visit www.le-group.co.uk

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